

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-31 (Canceled).

32. (New) A photographic print vending apparatus
comprising:

media accepting means for accepting a removable recording
medium having photographic image information stored thereon;

5 image information reading means for reading the image
information from the recording medium;

advertisement information storing means for storing
advertisement information;

10 printing means for printing the image information onto a
sheet;

a housing which houses the media accepting means, the image
information reading means, the printing means and the
advertisement information storing means; and

15 an outlet in the housing from which the printed sheet is
output;

wherein the printing means prints the advertisement
information onto the sheet with the image information, when an
advertisement information printing mode is set.

33. (New) The apparatus according to claim 32, further comprising price option selecting means for selecting a price option for printing the image information;

wherein the advertisement mode is set based on the price option selected by a user.

34. (New) The apparatus according to claim 32, wherein the image information includes a plurality of sets of unit image information;

5 wherein the print vending apparatus further comprises unit image selecting means for selecting a set of unit image information desired by the user from the plurality of sets of the unit image information; and

10 wherein the printing means prints the selected set of the unit image information on the sheet together with the advertisement image stored in the advertisement image storing means, when the advertisement information printing mode is set.

35. (New) The apparatus according to claim 32, further comprising advertisement information receiving means for receiving advertisement information supplied from a remote site via a communication network;

5 wherein the advertisement information storing means stores
the advertisement information received by the advertisement
information receiving means.

36. (New) The apparatus according to claim 32, further
comprising:

status detection means for detecting status of the printing
means; and

5 notification means for notifying a remote site of the
status detected by the status detection means.

37. (New) The apparatus according to claim 32, wherein the
printing means comprises a plurality of printers, each of which
is adapted to print the image information on the sheet; and

5 wherein the print vending apparatus further comprises image
information distribution means for distributing the image
information read by the image information reading means to at
least one of the plurality of printers in accordance with a
predetermined standard.

38. (New) The apparatus according to claim 37, wherein the
image information includes a plurality of sets of unit image
information;

wherein the print vending apparatus further comprises unit
5 image selecting means for selecting a plurality of sets of unit
image information desired by the user from the plurality of sets
of the unit image information; and

wherein the image information distribution means distributes
the selected unit image information sets to at least one of the
10 plural printers in accordance with a selecting order of the sets
of unit image information.

39. (New) The apparatus according to claim 36, further
comprising ejecting means for conveying a sheet on which the
image information is printed by any of the plurality of printers
to eject the sheet through the outlet of the case.

40. (New) The apparatus according to claim 32, wherein the
media accepting means comprises an attachment for accepting the
recording medium, wherein the attachment is slanted such that an
opening of the attachment is directed downward.

41. (New) The apparatus according to claim 32, wherein the
printing means comprises a plurality of sublimation thermal
printers.

42. (New) A photographic print vending apparatus
comprising:

a case having an outlet;

media accepting means for accepting a removable recording
5 medium having photographic print information stored thereon;

print information reading means for reading the print
information from the recording medium;

a plurality of printers, each of which is adapted to print
at least one image on at least one sheet in accordance with the
10 print information read from the recording medium; and

print information distribution means for distributing the
print information read from the recording medium to at least one
of the plurality of printers in accordance with a predetermined
standard;

15 wherein each of the plurality of printers comprises image
data generating means for generating image data to be printed
based on the print information distributed by the print
information distribution means, and printing means for printing
the generated image data onto a sheet; and

20 wherein the sheet with the image data printed thereon is
output through the outlet of the case.

43. (New) The apparatus according to claim 42, further comprising status detection means for detecting a status of each of the plurality of printers;

5 wherein the print information distribution means distributes the print information in accordance with detection results of the status detection means.

44. (New) The apparatus according to claim 43, wherein the status detection means detects a remaining amount of an expendable supply in each of the printers; and

5 wherein the print information distribution means distributes the print information to printers having a detected remaining amount of the expendable supply have enough remainders for printing.

45. (New) The apparatus according to claim 43, wherein order information is applied to each of the plural printers;

wherein the status detection means detects a remaining amount of an expendable supply in each of the printers; and

5 wherein the print information distribution means distributes the print information to the plurality of printers in accordance with the order information and a detection result of the status detection means in order of the remaining amount of the expendable supply in each printer such that the print information

10 is distributed first to one of the printers which has the lowest remaining amount the expendable supply.

46. (New) The apparatus according to claim 43, wherein the status detection means detects a remaining amount of an expendable supply in each of the printers, and the print vending apparatus further comprises:

5 print quantity designation means for designating a print quantity desired by a user;

remaining amount comparing means for comparing a required amount of the expendable supply necessary for the designated print quantity with the detected remaining amount of the
10 expendable supply in each of the printers; and

warning means for warning of a print capacity shortage when the remaining amount comparing means determines that the remaining amount of the expendable supply is less than the required amount.

47. (New) The apparatus according to claim 46, wherein the print quantity designation means designates print quantity by unit amount; and wherein the print vending apparatus further comprises designation canceling means for canceling the print
5 quantity designation based on an output result of the remaining amount comparing means.

48. (New) The apparatus according to claim 42, wherein the plural printers are grouped into a plurality of groups of at least one of the printers; and

wherein the print information distribution means distributes the print information to the at least one of the printers by group.

49. (New) The apparatus according to claim 42, wherein the plurality of printers print the image data on different types of sheets;

wherein the print vending apparatus comprise sheet selecting means for selecting one of the sheet types desired by a user; and

the print information distribution means distributes the print information to the at least one of the printers based on the sheet type selected by the sheet selecting means.

50. (New) The apparatus according to claim 42, further comprising:

status detection means for detecting a status of each of the plurality of printers; and

notification means for notifying a remote site of the detected status.

51. (New) The apparatus according to claim 50, wherein each of the plurality of printers has respective identification information; and

5 wherein the notification means notifies the remote site of the detected status together with the identification information of the corresponding printer.

52. (New) The apparatus according to claim 42, further comprising ejecting means for conveying a sheet on which the image data is printed by any of the plurality of printers to eject the sheet through the outlet of the case.

53. (New) The apparatus according to claim 42, wherein the plurality of printers comprise a plurality of sublimation thermal printers.

54. (New) The apparatus according to claim 53, wherein each of the plurality of printers comprises property storage means for storing property information relating to a thermal print head property, and the print vending apparatus comprises:

5 property reading means for reading the property information stored in the property storage means of each printer; and

power supply means for controlling a supply of power to the plurality of printers in accordance with the property information of each printer read by the property reading means.

55. (New) A photographic print vending apparatus comprising:

a case having an outlet;

media accepting unit which accepts a removable recording
5 medium having photographic image information stored thereon;

an image information reader which reads the image
information from the recording medium;

an advertisement information storage unit which stores
advertisement information;

10 a processor connected to the image information reader and
the advertisement information storage unit; and

a plurality of printers which print images on a sheet based
on image data supplied from the processor;

wherein, when an advertisement printing mode is set, the
15 processor reads the advertisement information from the
advertisement information storage unit, synthesizes the read
advertisement information and the image information read by the
image information reader, and supplies the synthesized
information to the printers as image data; and

20 wherein a printed sheet is output through the outlet of the
case.

56. (New) The apparatus according to claim 55 further
comprising a payment option selector which selects one of pay
printing and free printing; and

 wherein processor discriminates which of pay printing and
5 free printing is selected, and the advertisement information
printing mode is set when free printing is selected.

57. (New) A print vending apparatus comprising:

a case having an outlet;

a processor; and

 a plurality of printers connected to the processor, wherein
5 each of the printers comprises: (i) an image former which
generates image data to be printed based on print information,
and (ii) a printing unit for printing the generated image data on
a sheet;

 wherein the print information is input to the processor, and
10 the processor distributes the received print information to at
least one of the plurality of printers in accordance with a
predetermined standard;

 wherein the printed sheet is outputted through outlet of the
case.

58. (New) The apparatus according to claim 57, wherein the processor detects status in each of the printers, and distributes the print information to the at least one of the plurality of printers in accordance with the detected status.

59. (New) The apparatus according to claim 57, wherein the plurality of printers are grouped into a plurality of groups of at least one printer; and

wherein the processor distributes the print information to the at least one printer by group.

60. (New) A method of operating a print vending machine for printing image information on a sheet, said method comprising:

reading image information from a recording medium removably attached to the print vending machine;

5 reading previously stored advertisement information;

printing the read image information on the sheet together with the read advertisement information; and

outputting the printed sheet through an outlet of the vending machine.

61. (New) A method of operating print vending machine for printing image information on a sheet with at least one of a plurality of printers, said method comprising:

5 distributing input print information to at least one of the plurality of printers in accordance with a predetermined standard;

generating image data to be printed in the printer to which the print information is distributed;

10 printing the generated image data on the sheet with using a printing mechanism in the printer which generates the image data; and

outputting the sheets printed by the plurality of printers through an outlet of the print vending machine.